364 For the Mossi, as for all other men, life ends in death, with or without illness. The Blacks do not know how to prevent diseases, and they know very little about fighting them. Hygiene is almost unknown. The huts are poorly aired, the chickens and in general all the animals in the inner courtyard walk everywhere and foul everything. The courtyard is swept often, but the hut of the sheep and goats is located in the midst of the other dwellings; the horse is kept within the soukala [514] itself; and people relieve themselves anywhere, wherever they find a convenient spot. The manure is gathered in a heap, but it is kept next to the huts and gives off a nauseating smell and noxious miasmas, especially at the beginning of the rainy season.

515 The Mossi are not dirty, but they cannot be called clean. Those who dwell in villages abundantly supplied with water at all times are the cleanest. The women, who fetch water every day and thus have an opportunity to wash, are usually cleaner than the men. A Mossi never passes a pond without drinking copiously and washing all over, and this would seem to prove that those who go dirty do so unwillingly; they have no water nearby, and it would be too much trouble to go to the river to bathe. Clothing, especially breechcloths, is often repulsively dirty. This is because washing wears out clothes, and who knows when new ones will be available? No wonder disease has such a hold on this people.

855 Child care is quite rudimentary: a few baths; enemas two or three 165 times a day, without which it is said their bowels would not move; and that is all. At the slightest indisposition the sorcerer is consulted, or else the child is left to himself; he will get well or die, and nothing is done about it. As a consequence, child mortality is very high.

758 Those who fall prey to a contagious disease are not isolated. A healthy child lies on the same mat as one with smallpox, a leper drinks from the common gourd unless his lips are covered with sores. People do, however, hesitate to sit where a syphilitic person with sores previously sat. The education of the Mossi in matters of hygiene is wholly yet to be learned.

576 On meeting someone, Mossi politeness requires that an inquiry be made about his health and that of all his relatives. The response invariably is "So-and-So is well," and the other in turn responds, "May God permit his health to wax." It is only after a little conversation that a certain person is said to be ill or to be getting better.

195 It is not said that someone died, but that he ran short of strength, that he passed away, that he left us.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[Pre-World War II Period]

What Mangin referred to euphemistically as "difficulties with the white man" was, to the Mossi, rather drastic punishment for non-payment of taxes. If a man refused to pay his taxes, the Mossi chief was permitted to sequester his goods and sell them. If the man had neither the taxes nor the goods, the chief had to send him and his wife (or wives) to the administrative post to be punished. Sometimes, a man and his wife would be made to look at the sun from sunrise to sunset while intoning the prayer *Ouennam co mam ligidi* ("God, give me money"). Other times, a man would be made to run around the administrative post with his wife on his back; if he had several wives, he had to take each one in turn. Then his wife or wives had to carry him around. The Mossi claim that a man had to run around the post three times, and his wife four. This is probably an exaggeration, however, because the numbers 3 and 4 are symbolically associated with men and women, respectively.

A further source of difficulty for the Mossi chiefs, and one which became more serious as time went by, was that they were charged by the administration to recruit men for both labor and military service. Initially, the chiefs had to supply men to transport grain for the French-organized agricultural societies from one region to another; later, they were commanded to supply labor for private and public works. Labouret states:

> The initial recruitment, which took place in 1912, was carried out without any difficulty, thanks to the unexpected afflux of volunteers. This was not the case in subsequent years. The reason for this was that the credulous natives of these distant regions, lacking any contact with the world, believed that the Europeans were carrying off their most robust youths to sell them to the Men of the Sea [mythical cannibalistic beings].[13]

The Mossi were alarmed at the high rate of mortality among the young men who went away to work. They had a saying, *Nansara toumde di Mossi* ("White man's work eats [kills] people"), and resisted the recruiting attempts of their chiefs. There was, however, less opposition to recruitment for military service, owing in part to the Mossi tradition of warfare. Many Mossi youths served in France during World War I, and additional hundreds served in an African contingent recruited "by an administrator named d'Arboussier, and with the cooperation of the Mogho Naba, to take possession of northern Togoland."[14]

The manner in which the Mossi chiefs administered their territories before the First World War was conditioned by the colonial administrators even when it was not directly controlled by them. The Mogho Naba had gradually lost most of his power, and he had no authority to act without the specific authorization of the French. He retained most of his cere-